

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently amended) A method for drilling a well in a coal seam, comprising:
pumping a drilling fluid comprising a liquid down a drill string to a bit drilling a substantially horizontal well bore in a coal seam;
pumping the drilling fluid down the drill string during drilling a plurality of lateral well bores in the coal seam off of the substantially horizontal well bore; and
reducing downhole pressure exerted by the drilling fluid by reducing a weight of drilling fluid in the well bore.

27. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising reducing down-hole pressure exerted by the drilling fluid by lightening the hydrostatic pressure of the drilling fluid.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising reducing down-hole pressure exerted by the drilling fluid by aerating the drilling fluid.

30. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising reducing down-hole pressure exerted by the drilling fluid by circulating compressed air and mixing the air with the drilling fluid.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising reducing down-hole pressure to nearly zero.

33. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising reducing down-hole pressure below over balanced conditions.

34. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising reducing down-hole pressure to approximately 150-200 pounds per square inch.

35. (Previously presented) A method of forming a well in a coal seam, comprising:
drilling a well including a horizontal bore and a horizontal drainage pattern extending from the horizontal bore in a coal seam using a drilling fluid comprising liquid; and
reducing the down-hole pressure sufficiently that drilling conditions are not over balanced for drilling of the horizontal bore by reducing a weight of drilling fluid in the well.

36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 36, further comprising reducing the down-hole pressure sufficiently that drilling conditions are under balanced for drilling of the horizontal drainage pattern.

38. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 35, wherein the coal seam is porous and fractured.

39. (Currently amended) A method for producing gas from a coal seam, comprising:
drilling, using a drilling fluid comprising liquid with drilling conditions that are not over
balanced, a horizontal drainage pattern extending from a horizontal well bore in a coal seam; and
producing gas collected by the horizontal well bore to the surface.

40. (Previously presented) A method for accessing a coal seam from the surface, comprising:
drilling a well bore in a coal seam; and
during drilling, pumping drilling fluid comprising liquid and cuttings from the well bore to the surface;
wherein drilling the well bore comprises drilling a main horizontal bore and a plurality of lateral bores extending from the main horizontal bore.

41. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 40, whereby hydrostatic pressure on the subterranean zone is reduced during drilling

42. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 40, wherein the well bore comprises a first well bore, further comprising pumping drilling fluid and cuttings from the well bore to the surface through a second well bore.

43. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 42, wherein the second well bore comprises a substantially vertical well bore.

44. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 42, wherein the first well bore comprises an articulated well bore.

45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 40, wherein the coal seam comprises a pressure below 150 pounds per square inch (psi).

47. (Canceled)

48. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 40, further comprising pumping drilling fluid and cuttings from the well bore to the surface using a downhole pump.

49. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 40, further comprising pumping drilling fluid and cuttings from the well bore to the surface using gas lift.

50. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 40, whereby drilling is accomplished without loss of drilling fluids into the subterranean zone and plugging the subterranean zone.

51. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 42, the first and second well bores intersecting one another at a junction, further comprising pumping drilling fluid and cuttings from proximate to the junction of the first and second well bores to the surface.

52. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 51, wherein the junction comprises a cavity.

53. (Currently amended) A method for underbalanced drilling of a coal seam, comprising:

drilling a substantially horizontal well bore in the coal seam; ~~and~~

during drilling of the substantially horizontal well bore in the coal formation, pumping drilling fluid comprising liquid and cuttings from the substantially horizontal well bore to the surface;

drilling a plurality of lateral well bores extending from the substantially horizontal well bore; and

during drilling of the plurality of lateral well bores, pumping drilling fluid comprising liquid and cuttings from the substantially horizontal well bore to the surface.

54. (Currently amended) A method for accessing a subterranean coal formation from the surface, comprising:

drilling a substantially horizontal well bore in the coal formation; ~~and~~
during drilling of the substantially horizontal well bore in the coal formation, reducing the weight of drilling fluids, the drilling fluids comprising liquid;
drilling a plurality of lateral well bores from the substantially horizontal well bore; and
during drilling of the plurality of lateral well bores, lightening hydrostatic pressure exerted by drilling fluids on the coal formation.

55. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 54, further comprising lightening hydrostatic pressure exerted by the drilling fluids by pumping the drilling fluids from the substantially horizontal well bore to the surface.

56. (Canceled)

57. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, further comprising pumping the drilling fluids using gas lift.

58. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 55, further comprising pumping drilling fluids from the substantially horizontal well bore to the surface through a second well bore intercepting the a substantially horizontal well bore.

59. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 29 wherein pumping a drilling fluid comprising a liquid down a drill string comprises pumping a drilling mud down the drill string.

60. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 35 wherein drilling a well including a horizontal bore in a coal seam using a drilling fluid comprising liquid comprises using a drilling mud.

61. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 40 wherein pumping drilling fluid comprising liquid comprises pumping drilling mud.

62. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 54 wherein lightening hydrostatic pressure exerted by drilling fluids comprises lightening hydrostatic pressure exerted by drilling mud.

63. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 53, whereby hydrostatic pressure on the subterranean zone is reduced during drilling.

64. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 53, wherein the well bore comprises a first well bore, further comprising pumping drilling fluid and cuttings from the first well bore to the surface through a second well bore.

65. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 64, wherein the second well bore comprises a substantially vertical well bore.

66. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 64, wherein the first well bore comprises an articulated well bore.

67. (Canceled)

68. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 53, wherein the coal seam comprises a pressure below 150 pounds per square inch (psi).

69. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 53, further comprising pumping drilling fluid and cuttings from the well bore to the surface using a downhole pump.

70. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 53, further comprising pumping drilling fluid and cuttings from the well bore to the surface using gas lift.

71. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 53, whereby drilling is accomplished without plugging the coal seam.

72. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 64, the first and second well bores intersecting one another at a junction, further comprising pumping drilling fluid and cuttings from proximate to the junction of the first and second well bores to the surface.

73. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 72, wherein the junction comprises a cavity.

74. (Canceled)

75. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising drilling the substantially horizontal well bore through a well bore having a radiused portion.

76. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, wherein the drilling fluid comprises foam.

77. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 74, further comprising drilling the substantially horizontal well bore through a well bore having a radiused portion.

78. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 35, ~~further comprising: wherein~~
drilling the horizontal drainage pattern comprises drilling a plurality of lateral well bores in the
coal seam off the substantially horizontal well bore; and
~~reducing the down hole pressure sufficiently that drilling conditions are not overbalanced~~
~~for drilling of the lateral well bores.~~

79. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 35, further comprising drilling the
substantially horizontal bore through a bore having a radiused portion.

80. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 35, wherein the drilling fluid
comprises foam.

81. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 78, further comprising drilling a
substantially horizontal bore through a bore having a radiused portion.

82. (Canceled)

83. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 54, further comprising drilling the
substantially horizontal well bore through a well bore having a radiused portion.

84. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 54, wherein the drilling fluid
comprises foam.

85. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 82, further comprising drilling the
substantially horizontal well bore through a well bore having a radiused portion.

86. (Previously presented) A method for accessing a subterranean coal formation from the surface, comprising:

drilling through a well bore having a radiused portion a substantially horizontal well bore in a coal formation;

drilling through the well bore having a radiused portion and the substantially horizontal well bore a plurality of lateral well bores in the coal formation; and

during drilling of the substantially horizontal well bore in the coal formation and the plurality of lateral well bores, using a drilling fluid comprising foam.

87. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 86, wherein drilling conditions are not overbalanced during drilling of the horizontal well bore and the plurality of lateral well bores.

88. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 86, further comprising producing gas and water collected by the substantially horizontal well bore and the plurality of lateral well bores to the surface.

89. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 86, further comprising:
conducting water and gas from the coal formation to a well bore junction, the well bore junction coupled to a fluid collection area at least partially disposed below the substantially horizontal well bore;

collecting water in the fluid collection area from the substantially horizontal well bore and the plurality of lateral well bores for production to the surface;

pumping water from the fluid collection area to the surface; and

producing gas to the surface.

90. (Previously presented) A method for drilling a well in a coal seam, comprising:
drilling a substantially horizontal bore in a coal seam using a drilling fluid;
drilling through the substantially horizontal well bore a plurality of lateral well bores in
the coal formation; and
lifting drilling fluid to the surface using a pump system having an inlet downhole.

91. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 90, wherein the inlet of the pump is proximate to the coal seam.

92. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 91, wherein the inlet of the pump is in the coal seam.